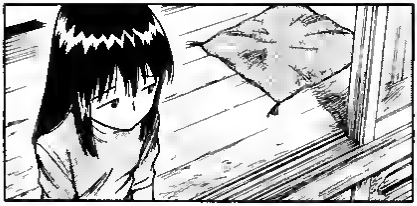
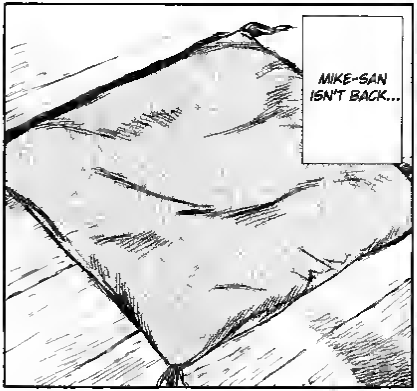
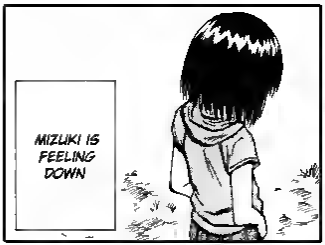
#14
INABAYAMA




MIKE-SAN ISN'T BACK...

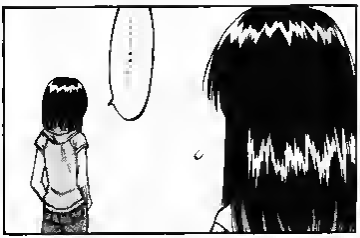

MIZUKI IS FEELING DOWN

MIKEE EE !
IT'S NOT UNCOMMON THAT SHE DISAPPEARS FOR A FEW DAYS
MIKE-SAN!
TIME TO EAT!
カーン カーン カーン
BUT THIS TIME, IT'S LONGER THAN USUAL

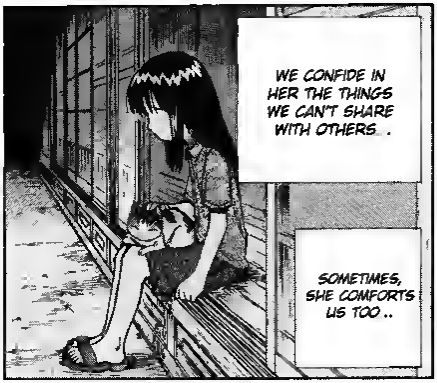
I DIDN'T KNOW THAT SHE HANGS OUT AROUND HERE.
I WONDER IF THE OTHER CAT IS HER FRIEND.
MIKE-SAN?!
!?
FLAP
FWA...

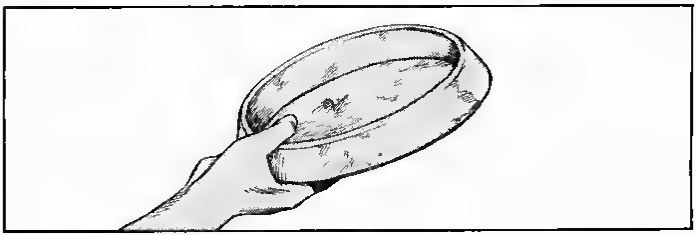
スクッ
MIKE-SAN HAS BEEN MISSING.
SINCE THAT DAY.
I HOPE NOTHING HAPPENED TO HER.
THEY SAY CATS ALSO HIDE WHEN THEY SENSE THAT THEY'RE ABOUT TO DIE.
I MEAN, SHE'S NOT YOUNG ANYMORE.
DON'T SAY SUCH NONSENSE, MIZUKI
SHE'LL COME BACK. I'M SURE OF THAT.

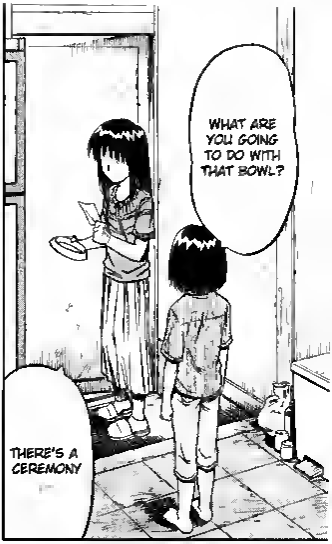
TO THE BOTH OF US
MIKE-SAN IS IRREPLACE-ABLE


.....

I WANT HER TO COME BACK SOON

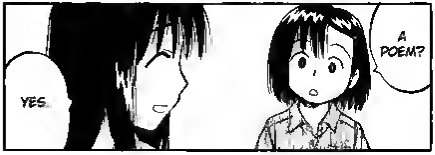

WE CONFIDE IN HER THE THINGS WE CAN'T SHARE WITH OTHERS..
SOMETIMES, SHE COMFORTS US TOO..

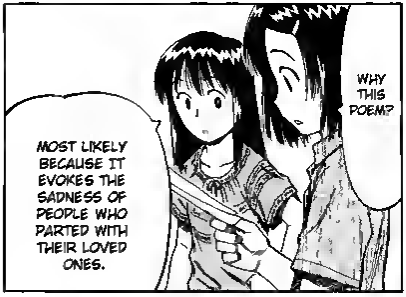


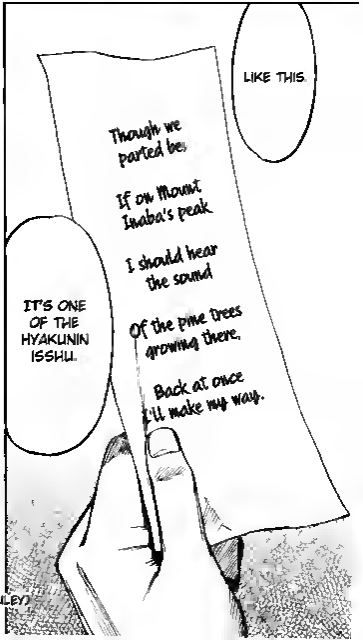


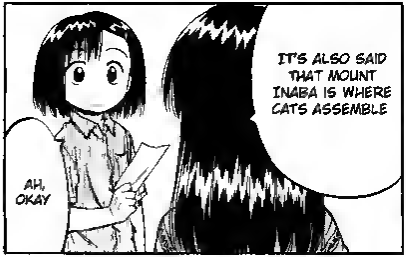
TO BRING CATS BACK HOME
GRANDPA TAUGHT IT TO ME WHEN I WAS LITTLE
WE MUST WRITE A POEM ON A PIECE OF PAPER AND PLACE IT UNDER THE BOWL *

* THIS PROCEDURE DIFFERS DEPENDING ON THE REGION



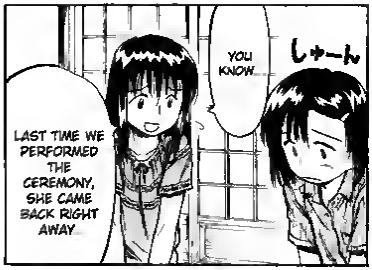



LIKE THIS
Though we parted be,
If on Mount Inaba's peak
I should hear the sound
Of the pine trees growing there,
Back at once I'll make my way.
IT'S ONE OF THE HYAKUNIN ISSHU.

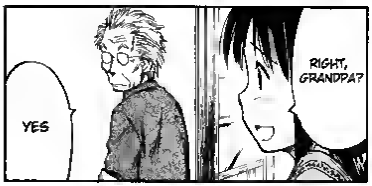


TN1. HYAKUNIN ISSHU IS A FAMOUS COLLECTION OF 100 CLASSIC JAPANESE POEMS
TN2. I USED AN EXISTING TRANSLATION OF THE POEM (CLAY MCCAULEY) I CHANGED THE FORM TO MAKE IT FIT.
HTTP://JTI.LIB.VIRGINIA.EDU/JAPANESE/HYAKUNIN/MACAULEY.HTML

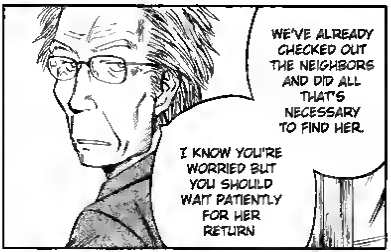
THE NEKODAMA HILL IN MOUNT ASO IS ALSO KNOWN FOR THAT. IT'S EVEN SAID THAT THE KING OF CATS LIVES THERE.
MOUNT INABA IS ONE OF THE MANY PLACES WHERE ANIMALS COMMUNE.
YES, IT'S COMMON FOR CATS TO GATHER UP IN THE MOUNTAINS.
WHO KNOWS THEN...
MAYBE AFTER COMING BACK HOME, MIKE-SAN MIGHT HAVE ALREADY LEARNED HOW TO HAUNT PEOPLE.
CATS GO TO THOSE PLACES TO PERFORM THEIR PUBLIC DUTIES AND WHEN THEY GET BACK, THEY GAIN A NEW HIERARCHY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.
BEING A CAT IS TOUGH!
IS IT POSSIBLE THAT SHE FEELS BETTER THERE AND WON'T COME BACK?
SHE DOUBTLESSLY WENT TO PERFORM HER DUTY.
SO DON'T MAKE A STORY OUT OF IT.


しゃーん
YOU KNOW
LAST TIME WE PERFORMED THE CEREMONY, SHE CAME BACK RIGHT AWAY

IF THAT HAPPENS, WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
CATS HAVE THEIR OWN WORLD TO LIVE WITH


RIGHT, GRANDPA?
YES

ALL RIGHT

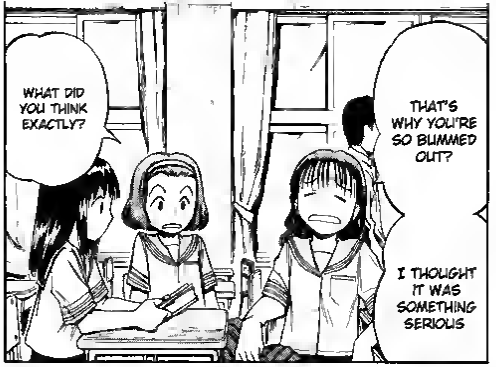

WE'VE ALREADY CHECKED OUT THE NEIGHBORS AND DID ALL THAT'S NECESSARY TO FIND HER.
I KNOW YOU'RE WORRIED BUT YOU SHOULD WAIT PATIENTLY FOR HER RETURN

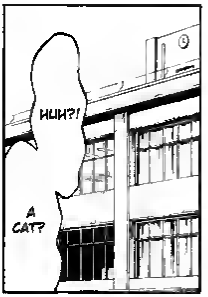
HMMM

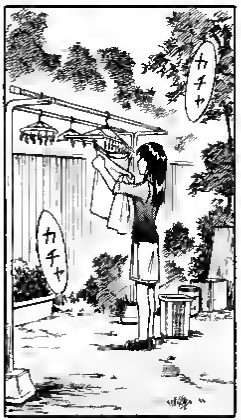
!!
I PROBABLY WASN'T SUPPOSED TO SEE IT...
BESIDES, THIS REMINDS ME OF A FOLKLORE STORY IN WHICH A CAT DISAPPEARS IN SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES.
のそり
!!
IT'S THE CAT FROM THE OTHER DAY?!

SCARY
ブルッ…
I GET THE FEELING HE WANTS TO HAUNT ME
IT'S NOT AN ORDINARY CAT

I HAVE TO ASK HIM.
MAYBE HE KNOWS SOMETHING ABOUT MIKE-SAN...
BUT...
GRANDFATHER ALWAYS SAYS NOT TO APPROACH SUCH CREATURES!
NO, NO!


WHAT DID YOU THINK EXACTLY?
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE SO BUMMED OUT?
I THOUGHT IT WAS SOMETHING SERIOUS


HUH?!
A CAT?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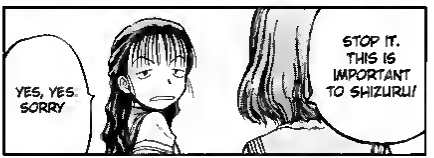
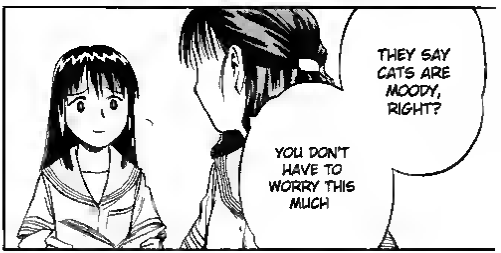
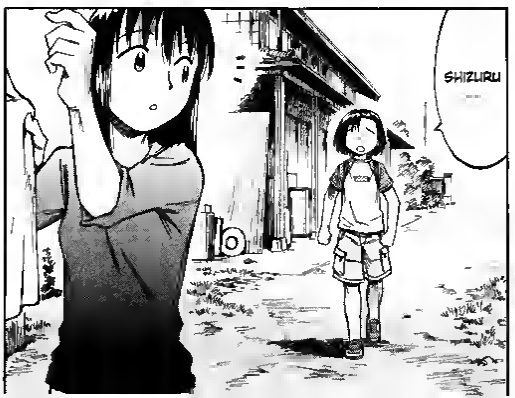
カチャ


YES, YES. SORRY
STOP IT. THIS IS IMPORTANT TO SHIZURU!

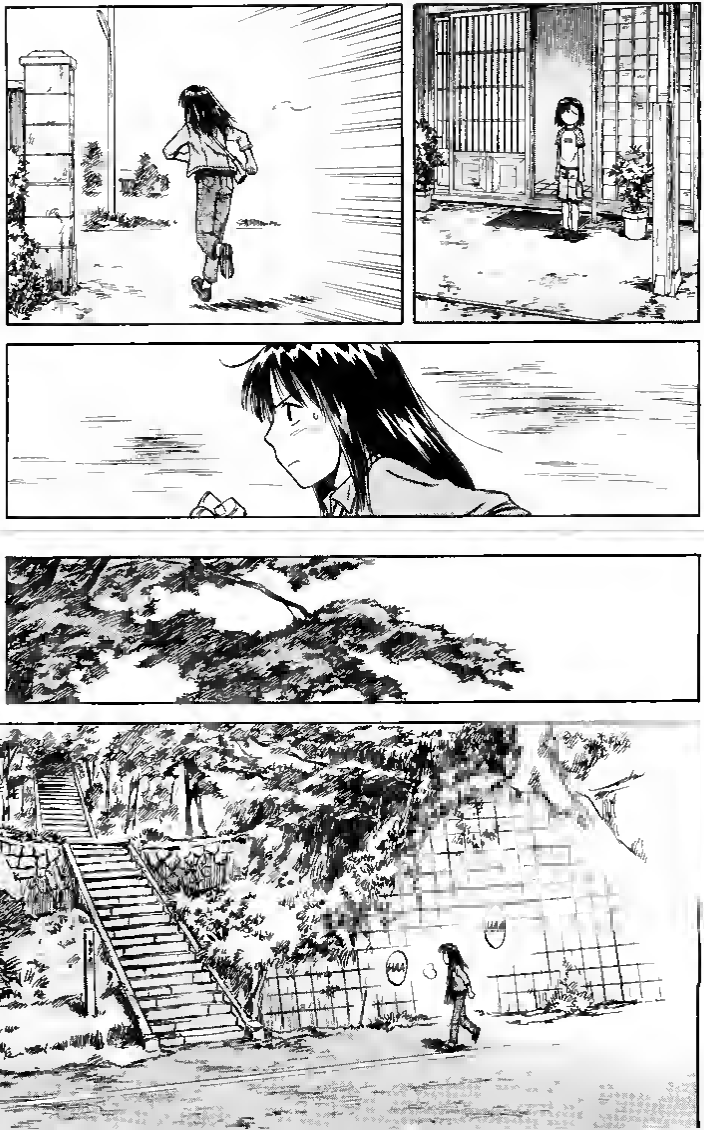

THEY SAY CATS ARE MOODY, RIGHT?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY THIS MUCH

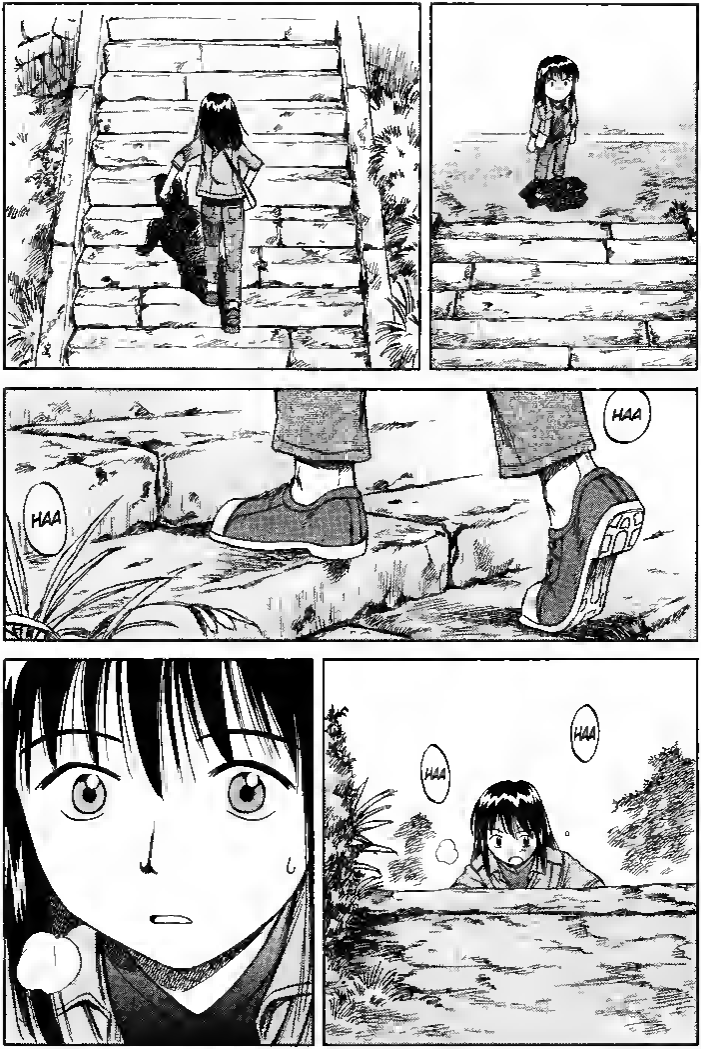

SHIZURU

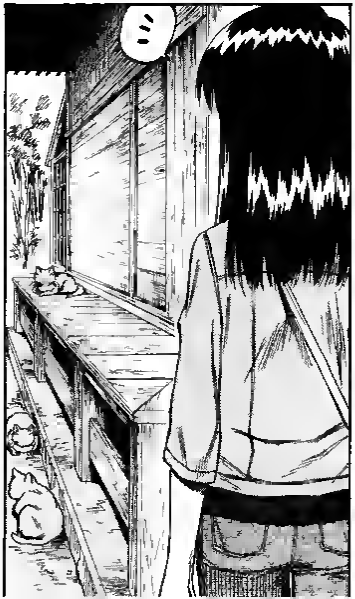
カチャ

A WEIRD CAT.
WELL...
ON THE WAY BACK, I ENCOUNTERED.
SOMETHING WRONG?
WAS IT A LITTLE DIRTY WITH LONG HAIR?
AND A TAIL THAT SPLITS IN TWO?
UH NO, HIS TAIL WAS NORMAL, BUT...
HE SPOKE WHEN HE PASSED BESIDE ME...
I WANT YOU TO TELL YOUR SISTER TO COME TO THE KANNON TEMPLE IN THE NORTH MOUNTAINS
SO I CAN TAKE HER WHEREVER SHE WANTS TO GO.

MAYBE IT WAS JUST IN MY HEAD, BUT...
"Mew"
SHIZURU?
SHOULDN'T WE TALK TO GRANDPA ABOUT THIS?
DON'T FRET, I'LL BE BACK ASAP
NO...
YOU STAY AT HOME, MIZUKI
WANT ME TO GO WITH YOU?




HAA
HAA
HAA
HAA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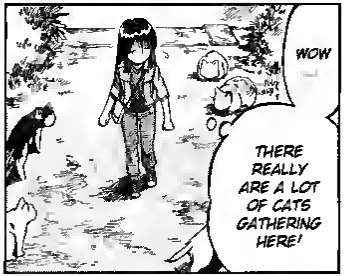
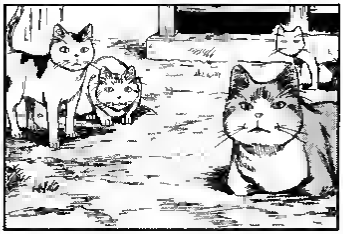
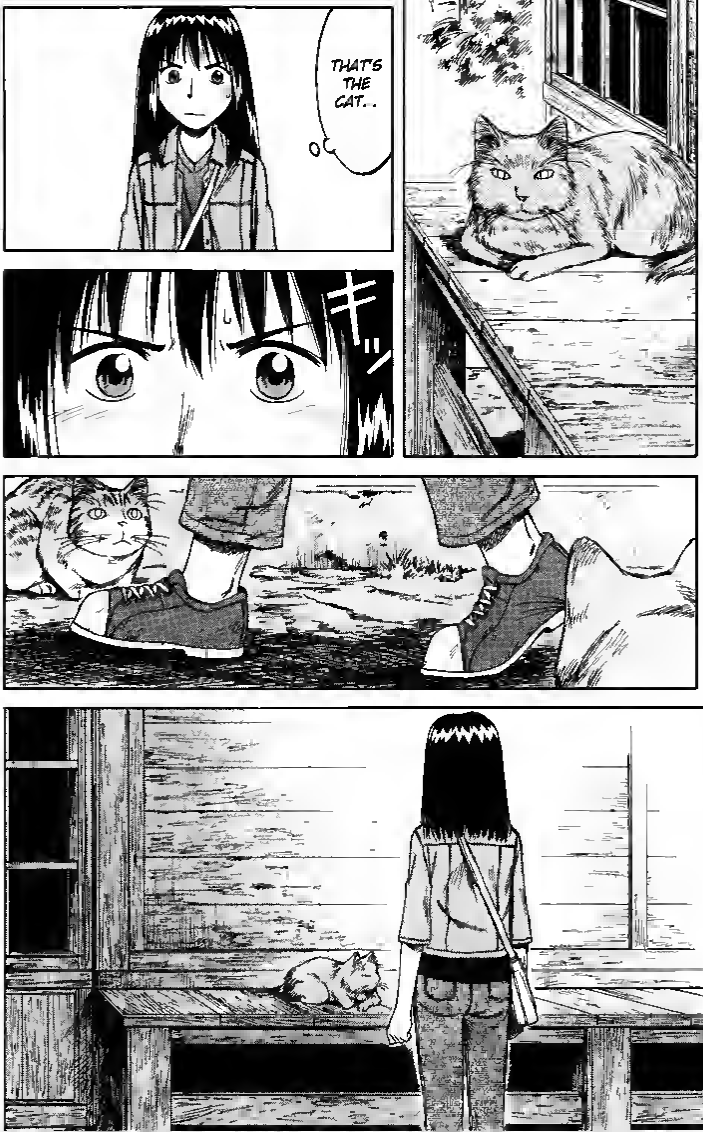
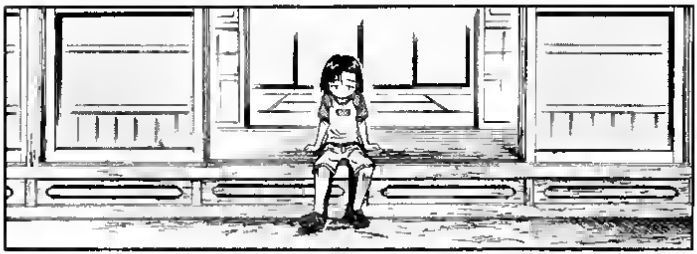

WOW
THERE REALLY ARE A LOT OF CATS GATHERING HERE!

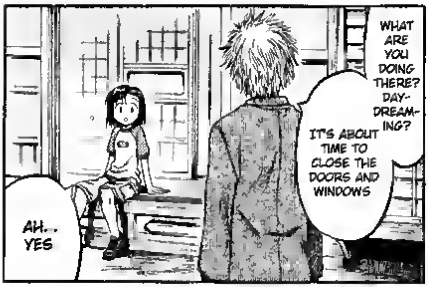


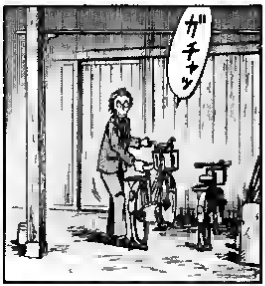

THAT'S THE CAT..
キン

SHE HASN'T CAME BACK SINCE..
DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?
YOU WERE WITH MIKE-SAN THE OTHER DAY,
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
ふぁ～～あ
とっ

FOLLOW ME.
COME.
YES
THIS WAY.
DO YOU KNOW...
WHERE SHE IS?
YOU WON'T NEED IT.
MY EYES WILL LIGHT YOUR WAY.
PUT THAT BACK.
ゴゾ




WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE? DAY-DREAMING?
IT'S ABOUT TIME TO CLOSE THE DOORS AND WINDOWS
AH... YES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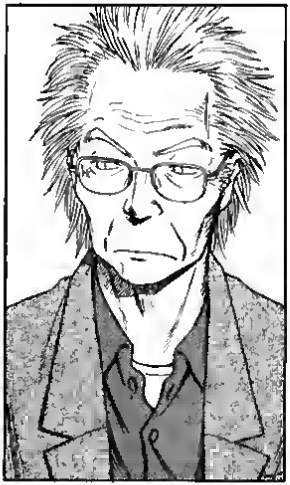
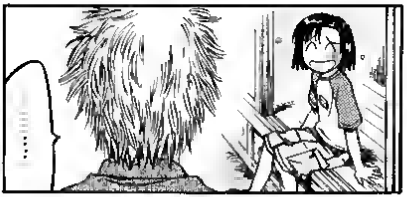


SHIZURU HASN'T COME BACK YET?
SHE HAS BUT SHE HAD SOMETHING TO DO
SHE LEFT AGAIN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THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR

IS MIKE-SAN DOING OKAY?
YES.

TELL ME
WHAT'S AT THE END OF THIS ROAD?
THIS PASSAGE LEADS TO THE MOUNTAINS.
YOU'VE PERFORMED THE CEREMONY THAT ALLOWS FOR CALLING BACK YOUR CAT, RIGHT?

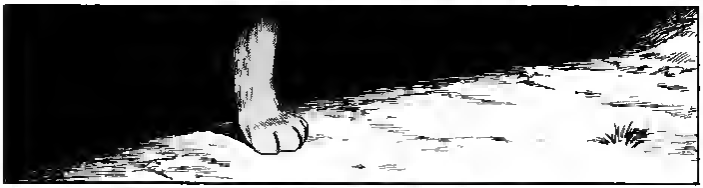
MOUNT WABA...
IS THE PLACE WHERE CAT'S "GO"...
IT'S LIKE A PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE, YOU SEE?
HUH? UH YES.
THEN YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IT...
A PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE?
SO SHE CAME HERE TO CARRY OUT HER DUTY?
NO THIS TIME, SHE CAME TO RELAX THANKS TO THE WARM SOURCES AT THE MOUNTAIN'S FOOT.
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S TIRED.
SO THE OTHER DAY, I SUGGESTED TO HER
TO COME AND LIVE IN THE MOUNTAINS.

I SUPPOSE SHE'S...
STILL ATTACHED TO YOU.
NOTHING
AND WHAT DID SHE TELL YOU?
!
HOW I ENVY HER!
HOW I ENVY HER!
I'M CERTAIN THAT SHE WILL BE HAPPY..
TO SEE YOU AGAIN!
.....
HE GOT BIGGER ?!

ガヤ
ガヤ
SHE'S BEHIND THAT DOOR.
FEW MORE MINUTES ON FOOT AND WE ARRIVE TO OUR CITY.
キャ
キャ
キャ
THIS SMELLS GOOD!
……

GO AHEAD.
OPEN THE DOOR.
I TRULY WANT MIKE-SAN TO COME BACK..
IS IT REALLY OKAY TO ENTER?
CATS SHOULD LIVE IN THEIR PROPER WORLD.
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

AND ASK HER TO GO BACK WITH YOU.
SHE'S RIGHT THERE. GO SEE HER...
GO!



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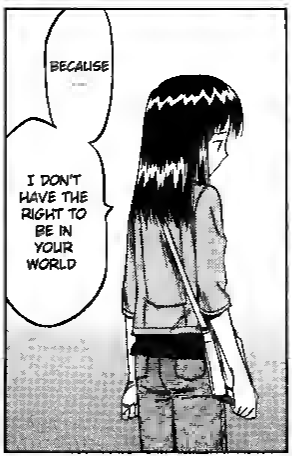
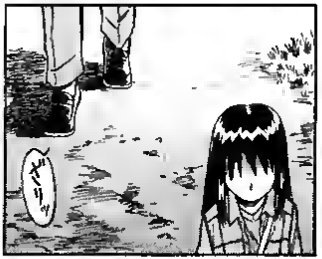
WHY DIDN'T YOU ENTER?


BECAUSE
I DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE IN YOUR WORLD

YOU PRESUME THAT WE DISAPPEAR BEFORE WE DIE...
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
LET ME TELL YOU AN INTERESTING STORY.
...
WE GO TO A PLACE WHERE WE FEEL TRULY SECURE AND WE PURIFY OURSELVES.
IT'S THE PROOF THAT WE DO NOT TRUST HUMANS.
THE SAME CAN BE SAID...
ABOUT THE CAT YOU LOVE SO MUCH

EVEN IF IT IS THE CASE,
MIKE-SAN MEANS A LOT TO US
THAT'S IRREL-EVANT
IF YOU MUST KNOW...
YOUR CAT HAS ALREADY LEFT THIS MOUNTAIN.
HOW I ENVY HER!
HOW I ENVY HER!

ゴッ
OUCH.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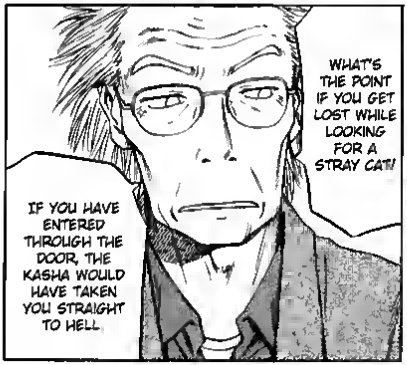
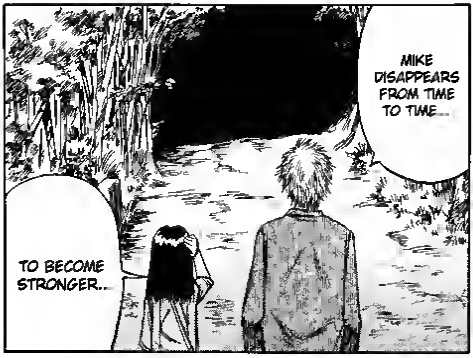
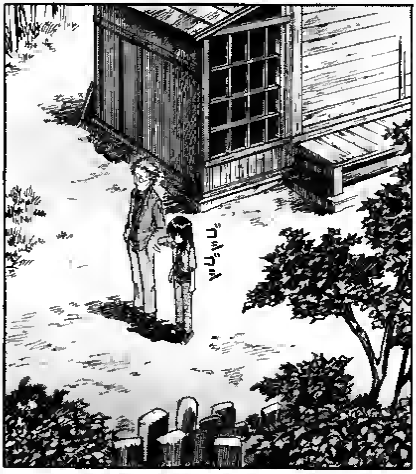

WHAT'S THE POINT IF YOU GET LOST WHILE LOOKING FOR A STRAY CAT!
IF YOU HAVE ENTERED THROUGH THE DOOR, THE KASHA WOULD HAVE TAKEN YOU STRAIGHT TO HELL

GR-
GRAND FATHER!
IDIOT!


MIKE DISAPPEARS FROM TIME TO TIME...
TO BECOME STRONGER..

I'M SORRY

SO SHE CAN REMAIN AT YOUR SIDE...
AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.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SHIZURU!
COME HERE QUICK!
AH!
カラカラカラ

I WAS SURPRISED TO SEE HER HERE!
ペチャ ペチャ
SHE CAME BACK RIGHT AFTER GRANDPA LEFT!
THE CEREMONY WORKED!

SHE'S LOOKING AT ME LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED.
.....
.....
THANK YOU, MIKE-SAN
.....
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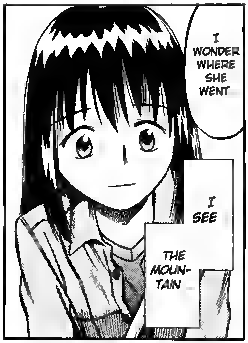
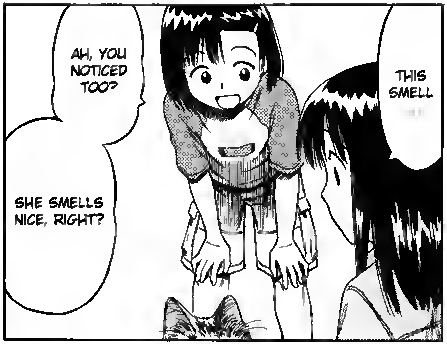
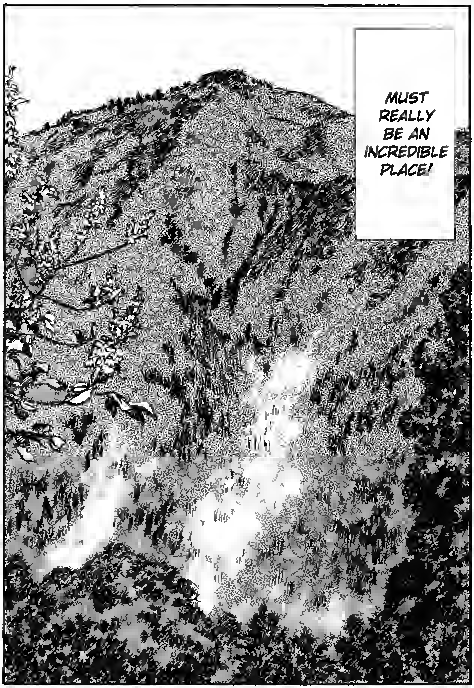

I WONDER WHERE SHE WENT
I SEE
THE MOUN-TAIN


AH, YOU NOTICED TOO?
SHE SMELLS NICE, RIGHT?
THIS SMELL


MUST REALLY BE AN INCREDIBLE PLACE!